

INSPECTION REPORT

CARMEL TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

Darlington

LEA area: Darlington

Unique reference number: 114324

Headteacher: Mr J O'Neill

Reporting inspector: B A Jones
18462

Dates of inspection: 11 - 14 December 2000

Inspection number: 223995

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Headlands Darlington. County Durham.
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Father John Caden.
Date of previous inspection:	13 th . February 1995

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Carmel College is a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. It is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive specialist Technology College with 1009 pupils, which is larger than average. The school is situated in the west end of Darlington. The pupils are drawn from a wide and diverse catchment area encompassing all of Darlington and virtually all of the south Durham area, as well as parts of North Yorkshire. The numbers of children eligible for free school meals is currently 14 per cent, which is broadly in line with the national average. The attainment of the pupils on entering the school has shown a variation over the past three years and is now above average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is 13 per cent, which is broadly in line with the national average and 1.5 per cent of pupils have statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, which provides good value for money. The school is popular with parents and consistently over-subscribed. The excellent leadership of the headteacher makes a positive impact in encouraging all staff and pupils to achieve their best. There is a good standard of teaching overall and this is effective in helping pupils to make good progress and achieve above average standards. The school evaluates all aspects of its work and standards achieved, and its approach is rigorous and effective. The provision for students in the sixth form is cost effective. The school is very well organised and ensures an excellent level of care for its pupils.

What the school does well

1. Excellent leadership from the headteacher and very good support from other senior staff ensure a clear educational direction to the school's work.
2. The quality of teaching is good and there is a significant amount of very good teaching.
3. Pupils make good progress and attain above average standards. They also make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
4. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make very good progress.
5. The school makes excellent provision for the care of its pupils. Pupils behave very well and show positive attitudes to their work and life in school.
6. The school provides a well-balanced curriculum. It enhances and extends the curriculum by providing a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents.
7. Pupils make very good progress in developing their skills in information and communication technology and benefit greatly from the contribution made by the majority of other subjects.

What could be improved

1. Some teaching, while satisfactory overall, lacks particular features to help pupils and students become more effective in their learning.
2. Target setting is not sufficiently well developed in all subject departments.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has responded very effectively to the issues identified in the previous report of 1995 and has achieved very good levels of improvement across a broad spectrum of its work. Since the previous inspection in 1995, the standards that pupils obtain have risen in Years 7 to 9 in line with the rate of improvement nationally. Pupils' results in GCSE examinations have improved at a faster rate than nationally. The average point scores of A-level GCE students is above the national average and in Year 2000 rose to its highest level to date. The quality of teaching has improved. It is now good overall with a significant proportion of very good teaching and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. This ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The school has very good capacity and commitment to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	B	B	B	A
A-levels/AS levels	D	C	A	N/A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

At the end of Year 9, pupils obtained results in the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests that were well above the national average and very high compared to schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. The trend in the school's results in recent years was broadly in line with the national trend to 1999 and rose again in 2000. In the work seen in the inspection, pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good progress in the core subjects, English, mathematics and science.

In 2000, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at GCSE grades A* to C and grades A*-G was above the national average. The proportion gaining at least one grade A*-G was well above average. When compared with similar schools on the basis of eligibility for free school meals, the overall point score at GCSE was well above average. The school's GCSE results have risen since the previous inspection at a faster rate than the national trend. The 2000 results at A-level GCE are above average and rose to the highest level to date, continuing an above average trend of results over the past three years. Only one candidate was examined in a vocational course and this candidate obtained a result above the national average.

The standards of work seen in the inspection reflected the above average results gained by pupils in recent public examinations. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and their good progress indicates that the school is not complacent. In the Year 2000, the school's management set challenging targets for GCSE examination performance. These targets were exceeded, and the number of pupils leaving without any qualifications was reduced to four per cent, a figure well below the national average. In the sixth form, the work seen broadly reflected the results students gained in A-level GCE and the work seen of students taking vocational courses was, overall, in line with course expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show very good attitudes. The majority of pupils are happy in school and show a good level of commitment to school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good generally and often excellent during lessons. This has a positive effect in creating an atmosphere where good learning takes place.
Personal development and relationships	The school makes excellent provision for pupils' personal development. Relationships between pupils and with their teachers are excellent.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are satisfactory and in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons seen. The teaching was good or better in three-quarters of lessons and very good in 40 per cent. There was a small percentage of excellent teaching. The overall quality of teaching in English and mathematics was good throughout the school and is satisfactory in science.

The good teaching quality has a positive impact upon pupils' learning and this is further helped by the very good behaviour of pupils and their generally positive attitudes towards work. Teachers have a good level of specialist knowledge. They plan and prepare their lessons well and use assessment effectively. Teachers know their pupils well and the work set is usually pitched accurately to meet individual needs and ensure that pupils make good progress. Classes are managed well and teachers' expectations are set at a high level. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and those pupils identified as gifted and talented make good progress.

The teaching of literacy skills is very good in English. The provision made by other subjects is very good and is having a positive impact upon standards. Overall, pupils' levels of development of numeracy skills are good and good provision is made for the teaching of numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: the curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced. The school offers a good and varied sixth-form curriculum which meets the needs and aspirations of students who have a range of attainment levels. All statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, which reflects the high level of commitment of the school towards these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. The personal and social education programme plays an important part in developing values as well as providing very good guidance in terms of behaviour and respect for others. The provision for each of the aspects, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's provision for the pastoral care of pupils is excellent and this has a positive impact in promoting achievement. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for child protection and to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and he is well supported by an effective senior management team. Subject departments are managed well and there is a shared commitment amongst all staff to raise standards further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is effective and supportive. Governors have a good level of knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and make a good contribution to the direction the school takes.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates all aspects of its work and standards achieved, and its approach is rigorous and effective. A great deal of information is collected about the performance of pupils and is increasingly being used to good effect in setting challenging and realistic targets to improve standards of work and examination results.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well. The principles of best value are applied carefully and the school is prudent in its spending. The school has clear and appropriate priorities, which are supported by careful financial planning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the dedication of teachers; • the amount of extra curricular activities and opportunities; • the caring nature of the school; • the way it develops pupils' spiritual welfare; • the good parents and teachers association; • strong music and school productions; • developments and opportunities in information and communication technology; • the way the school helps build pupils' self confidence; • foreign exchanges and visits; • open and welcoming sixth-form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilities during lunchtime; • storage for pupils' bags etc.; • teaching of revision skills; • length of school day increased to accommodate all activities and include recreation time. • Improved and safer access to the rear of the school.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by the parents and shares their concern for the safety of pupils using the unlit access to the rear of the school. The length of the school day meets the recommendations of the Department for Education and Employment and the school uses the time effectively to promote good standards.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Excellent leadership from the headteacher and very good support from other senior staff ensure a clear educational direction to the school's work.

1. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and a clear vision regarding the direction in which the school is heading. This is shared with the rest of the staff and ensures that the raising of standards in all aspects of the school's work is the first priority. Members of the senior staff give very good support and are successful in maintaining an ethos where the commitment to the care of pupils and an expectation that pupils will produce their best efforts underpin the work of the school. The school uses its resources well. The principles of best value are applied carefully and the school is prudent in its spending. The school has clear and appropriate priorities, which are supported by careful financial planning.
2. The school evaluates all aspects of its work and standards achieved, and its approach is rigorous and effective. A great deal of information is collected about the performance of pupils and is increasingly being used to good effect in setting challenging and realistic targets to improve standards of work and public examination results. Heads of year and subject departments are clear about their roles and they too are successful in improving standards, for example in monitoring the quality of pupils' learning. The quality of teaching is monitored closely and has led to a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The monitoring of pupils' progress, using reliable and valid information is an improving feature of the school's work and is increasingly successful in identifying and tackling underachievement and encouraging pupils to raise their sights.
3. A very good level of improvement in the school's work has been made since the previous inspection. The headteacher and senior staff used the key issues highlighted in that report, along with other issues identified through the body of the report to improve standards and to give a clear focus to some of the developments undertaken. For example standards in design and technology have been raised significantly and the provision for information and communication technology is now very good.
4. The work of the school is well supported by the governors. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and the areas needing further improvement. Their support has been particularly valuable at the strategic level and has helped the school in their various bids to attract additional funding. This has been another area of success and has enabled the school, through its designation as a technology college for example, to expand the resources available to drive up standards.

The quality of teaching is good and there is a significant amount of very good teaching.

5. Over three-quarters of the teaching observed was good or better, and some teaching of the highest quality was seen. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection and is having a clear impact on the quality of pupils' learning, the progress pupils make and the standards they achieve.
6. Teachers plan and prepare their work well. They usually have clear objectives and often share these with their pupils. This gives a clear direction to lessons and pupils respond well, particularly when they are reminded of where the lessons are heading and what is

expected of them in terms of what and how they will learn. The positive effects of good planning that met the needs of pupils accurately was observed in the teaching of a class of low attaining Year 10 pupils in mathematics. The exercises the teacher produced offered just the right degree of challenge so that pupils were interested and enjoyed success. All pupils made good progress and those with special educational needs were helped in this process by the planned, positive contribution from the teaching assistant present.

7. Teachers generally have a very good level of knowledge and understanding about their subject, which extends to how to prepare pupils to succeed in examinations in the particular subjects. In music for example, a Year 10 class analysed a piece of music and in learning what to listen for and which technical terms best described what they heard, they were prepared well for the demands that they will meet in the GCSE examination. The process was not a narrow examination-based session, but an enjoyable musical experience that served a distinct purpose and enhanced the way the pupils learned. Teachers' expertise in their subjects forms the basis of their authority in the classroom and is respected by their pupils. Such a depth of knowledge helps teachers to bring lessons to life as in a Year 8 science lesson. Here the teacher's use of common, everyday examples in studying the properties of different materials engaged the pupils and involved them in their learning, and made them keen to learn more because they were able to relate to their own experience.
8. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively in their teaching across a broad selection of subjects. In lessons in French with Year 7 pupils, teachers use a variety of aids including sophisticated interactive whiteboards, to very good effect in promoting pupils' understanding and their learning about the use of technology. In a Year 9 design and technology lesson, the teacher's use of computer aided design was excellent practice and served as an inspiration to pupils in their work. In this mixed ability class, pupils of very different levels of attainment made very good progress and developed their computer skills in a lesson that they clearly enjoyed.
9. A feature of much of the teaching is the high level of expectation maintained by teachers relating to the quality of pupils' work as well as their behaviour and attitudes. In a Year 10 English lesson with lower attaining pupils, the teacher found the right balance between challenge and praise, based upon the expectation that pupils would do their best work. This raised the self-esteem of the group and they worked successfully at a brisk pace. The subsequent quality of learning was high and pupils made very good progress in their written course work.
10. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good specialist teaching. For example, a small group of Year 7 pupils made very good progress and learned effective ways to improve their spelling under the direction of a teacher well versed in the methods that best meet their particular needs. In the best lessons, teachers are very effective in ensuring that pupils with particular needs at both ends of the attainment spectrum are catered for and make good progress. For example, in Year 9 English lesson, careful use of questioning techniques involved all pupils and ensured that low attaining pupils with special educational needs made a good contribution. The highest attaining pupils in the school are given good opportunities to realise their potential, whether their gifts and talents lie in academic work or sport or the arts. The school has developed a clear policy to cater for these pupils and a register that identifies their areas of strength. The formal lesson planning to meet their needs is a developing feature of the school's work and the necessary systems and strategies are in place.
11. Teachers manage their classes very well. They are helped considerably by the very good

behaviour and the positive attitudes that pupils exhibit. Teachers and pupils enjoy positive relationships that allow humour to pervade lessons without detracting from the learning that takes place. There is a warmth in these relationships that develops from the teachers' good levels of knowledge about their pupils. It is on the basis of such knowledge that a number of students are given access to GCE A-level courses, where their attainment at GCSE would suggest that they will find the work too difficult. The school has a good record of promoting success in these students to a level that gives them access to higher education.

12. Teachers are effective in assessing pupils' learning and using question and answer techniques to take their work on. In the best lessons teachers use such techniques to give pace to the lessons. For example in a Year 10 geography lesson, pupils were keen to answer, were not afraid to get answers wrong and they learned from mistakes made. The positive relationships between pupils allowed this process to be effective and the activities were timed so that the lesson moved at a fast pace. The process enhanced the quality of the pupils' learning and they made very good progress in learning about the problems associated with living in an inner city environment.
13. Teachers' use of homework is not as consistently good as many of the stronger features described above. There is some very good practice where homework is used effectively to extend the work undertaken in class. Here it is set regularly, marked assiduously and teachers' comments help pupils to take their work further. However, in other cases, homework is set hastily and consists of finishing off classwork and does not extend the independent learning skills of pupils.

Pupils make good progress and attain above average standards. They also make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.

14. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school is now above average overall. There are effective procedures in place to measure these attainment levels in order to give a baseline against which pupils' progress may be measured. Current information, based upon Year 6 National Curriculum test scores, other standardised test scores and the school's own tests indicate that the present Year 7 pupils are above average, while pupils in Year 8 are broadly in line with the average. At the end of Year 9, pupils obtained results in the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests that were well above the national average and very high compared to schools deemed to be similar on the basis of the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. In the same year, pupils' results in their GCSE examinations were above average, as were sixth form students' GCE A-level results.
15. In the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests for Year 9 pupils, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above was well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The average points score in all three subjects was well above average. Compared to similar schools, pupils' performance in all three subjects was very high. Up to 1999, when the last comparative figures were available, the trend in the school's results was broadly in line with the national trend.
16. In the Year 2000 GCSE examinations, the average points score per pupil was above average, and up to 1999, when the latest figures were available, the school's trend in results was above the national trend. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C was above average, as was the proportion gaining five or more A*-G grades. The proportion gaining one or more grades A*-G was well above the national average. Compared to similar schools, on the basis of free school meals, the results were well above average. The school set challenging targets for this group of pupils and either met or exceeded the targets in each of the categories, five plus A*-C, one plus A*-C and

average points score per pupil. There was some variation between subjects. English and science were among the weaker subjects; the results in science were below average.

17. A number of the school's higher attaining pupils leave the school at the end of Year 11 to attend other institutions that provide GCE A-level courses. In the Year 2000, the average points score of students taking two or more GCE A-levels was well above the national average and maintained an upward trend established over the previous three years.
18. The standards of work seen in the inspection reflected the above average results gained by pupils in recent public examinations. Year 11 pupils are currently working at a higher level in English and science. Pupils are achieving well in relation to their prior attainment and their good progress indicates that the school is not complacent; challenging targets set and reached confirm this.
19. The provision made for the teaching of literacy skills is very good. Most departments are effective in promoting the raising of literacy standards in their subject. The majority of pupils express themselves clearly in writing and can write with due sensitivity to the demands of different audiences and purposes. They take due care with spelling, punctuation, handwriting and the presentation of their work. Pupils achieve higher than average standards in writing. Reading skills are well developed and pupils have access to a suitably wide range of reading material. A large majority of pupils read with fluency and confidence and can use higher order reading skills in their learning. A reading partners scheme provides effective help, support and encouragement for poorer readers in Years 7 to 9. Speaking and listening skills are well developed and above average standards are reached. The majority of pupils are confident, fluent talkers and participate with enthusiasm in discussion and group work. Standard English is used appropriately, and the conventions of debates and meetings are understood and adhered to. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to formulate thoughtful extended answers, and to develop and extend the contributions of others. Listening skills are well developed and older pupils in Years 10, 11 and in the sixth form have become adept at reaching compromise, agreeing group decisions and negotiating resolutions.
20. Overall, pupils' levels of development of numeracy skills are good. For example, pupils in Years 7 to 9 have good recall of basic number facts and use a wide range of strategies when doing mental calculations. Pupils are confident in their use of pencil and paper arithmetic and mental calculation and are able to use calculators efficiently. They interpret data well and make good use of their graphing skills across other subjects in the curriculum. For example in science, pupils plot data from an experiment, draw a line of best fit and then describe the relationship between the strength of an electromagnetic field and the amount of current passing through it. Pupils' basic numeracy skills are enhanced by the use of a computer-based integrated learning system, (ILS). Reports are produced automatically by the system and indicate that impressive gains are made in pupils' progress over a short period of time. These gains, however, would have a longer lasting benefit if information on individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses were given to subject teachers, and if the methods taught in mathematics were mirrored in the computer lessons.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make very good progress.

21. The school demonstrates a high level of commitment to supporting pupils with special educational needs. The senior managers and the governing body view good provision as a priority and make very good levels of resources available to these pupils. The

department is very well led. The quality of documentation is high and there are very good systems in place to support learning across departments. The individual education plans are very good and are informed by subject departments adding contributions that make their work more effective. Good procedures are in place to ensure that pupils have realistic and challenging targets for improvement, and their progress is carefully monitored. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and the work of support assistants working with pupils in lessons is central to this progress.

The school makes excellent provision for the care of its pupils. Pupils behave very well and show positive attitudes to their work and life in school.

22. The ethos of the school reflects a commitment to high standards in all aspects of pupils' life and work in school. This commitment includes a purposeful and direct valuing of pupils as individuals and is seen in the quality of care extended to them, which is excellent. Satisfactory arrangements are in place for child protection and to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. However, there exists an issue relating to pupils' safety in their use of an unlit access path to the rear of the school. The personal and social education programme plays an important part in developing values as well as providing guidance in terms of behaviour and respect for others. Teachers know pupils very well and relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent; this helps to engender the excellent relationships that exist between pupils.
23. A great deal of work continues outside the taught curriculum and in the local community to provide opportunities for pupils to mature and learn, for example in religious based retreats, educational visits and work with local business and commerce. Pupils like school and commit themselves to the work of the school.
24. The general level of support received by pupils has a positive impact upon standards, learning and behaviour. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good. In many lessons, behaviour is excellent and has a direct impact upon the quality of learning taking place. Pupils in general demonstrate positive attitudes towards school and are conscientious in completing their work.

The school provides a well-balanced curriculum. It enhances and extends the curriculum by providing a wide range of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents.

25. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum to all pupils that meets statutory requirements. From Years 7 to 9, pupils follow a common curriculum and within the teaching day they receive a good and varied range of learning experiences. Very good provision is made for the development of pupils' information and communication technology skills in specific lessons and across the curriculum, particularly in design and technology. Imaginative timetabling allows pupils to follow a basic skills enhancement course in Year 7 that contributes to the good levels of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.
26. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 gives pupils a wide selection of GCSE courses with pupils' choices being largely met. Vocational courses have been extended with the introduction of GNVQ courses in engineering and in information and communication technology. The latter will improve pupils' experience of working with a range of information and communication technology applications, while requiring them to take responsibility for their own learning and to work with a degree of independence.
27. Opportunities are taken during the school year to focus on particular themes across all

subjects. For example, during a planned “Poetry Day”, poems were written about mathematics, while on a “Number Day”, calculations were done in history and during a “European Week”, a video link was established with pupils in Spain. The wide range of activities that take place beyond the school day enriches the lives of many pupils with departments running clubs and revision classes. There is an extensive range of sporting activities with regular clubs and with competitions taking place in school and against other schools. The provision for music is excellent with large numbers of pupils performing at a high standard in choirs, orchestras and musical shows.

28. The school offers a very good curriculum in the sixth form, with a significant increase in the number of subjects since the last inspection. Psychology, sports studies, law and music technology are popular options, and there are plans to develop further the vocational courses that are currently on offer. There are opportunities for students to re-sit GCSE English and mathematics. All students follow a religious education programme, which concentrates on moral and ethical issues and is very popular with students. They see topics such as crisis management as having direct relevance to their lives after school. Opportunities for physical education are available to all students, and those who study the coaching courses in sport find them to be well-taught and helpful. The new programme of Advanced Subsidiary (AS) and GCE A-level has been successfully implemented this term. Those students who are finding GCE A-level work difficult are appropriately supported, and the school has a good record for helping students to complete their courses and achieve GCE A-level passes. Provision for the delivery of key skills is very good and is very effectively coordinated. Personal and career guidance is provided through the tutorial system, which is very effective and is valued by the students. Information about career opportunities and higher education entry requirements is well provided for.

Pupils make very good progress in developing their skills in information and communication technology and benefit greatly from the contribution made by the majority of other subjects across the curriculum.

29. Provision for information and communication technology is very good, but some of the developments have not yet been fully implemented. In some subjects provision is very good, and planning for the provision of information and communication technology skills teaching is well established, for example in history, modern foreign languages and music. In design and technology, information and communication technology skills are taught extensively; for example computer-aided design is fully embedded in the curriculum and is used by all pupils. Local primary schools also use the facility and this is of great benefit to them and to the school in ensuring good liaison at departmental level. In many other subjects, provision is satisfactory overall, but lacks the high level of consistency found in the examples above. The inconsistencies take place where the teachers’ skill levels are not yet sufficiently developed or where access to information and communication technology hardware is limited because of the demands made by the network. In both cases, issues have been identified and plans are well advanced to address the issues. Good systems are in place to track pupils’ access to, and attainment in, information and communication technology across the curriculum, but currently, the use of these systems, whilst developing is not yet fully embedded in the school’s practice.
30. In Years 10 and 11, a GNVQ course has been introduced in information and communications technology. This course makes use of commercially developed materials and leads to a GNVQ (Part 1) or full GNVQ certificate. The materials are motivating and well presented. There is an issue relating to the time required to complete the syllabus, but pupils are keen to follow the course and expect to find additional time at school, or at home, to complete required assignments. Pupils report that they are

motivated by the materials and well supported by teachers. Overall, achievements in information and communications technology in Years 10 and 11 are good.

31. The school has made a significant commitment to using popular commercial packages to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in Key Stage 3. Pupils in Year 7 spend five hours per fortnight using the programs. In these lessons the pupils are well motivated and the outputs from the system show impressive gains in attainment in literacy and numeracy. Records of pupils' progress are scrupulously maintained and a start has been made to produce reports that evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of pupils. This information, if used by subject teachers, will allow them to address identified weaknesses. This is a new development for the school and the assessments being made do not yet fully inform curriculum planning. However, the systems are in place and there is a commitment to succeed.

What could be improved

Some teaching, while satisfactory overall, lacks particular features to help pupils and students become more effective in their learning.

32. During the inspection, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. However, in around a quarter of teaching, while pupils make satisfactory progress, there are features missing that prevent good learning taking place. It is usually the case that in any one of these lessons, individual features are missing. For example, the homework set is sometimes of the type that fails to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding, but gives them more to do of the same level of demand to little effect on their development. On occasion, teachers' marking, while providing confirmation of effort and accuracy, does not help the pupils to take their work further by helpful comment on how the work could be improved. In some lessons, teachers rely too heavily on a very restricted style of teaching that leaves the pupils too passive and uninvolved in the process of their learning. In these cases, pupils continue to behave well and they undertake the necessary work but do little to improve their skills as independent learners. Finally, the short-term planning in some lessons does not address the differing needs of pupils in mixed ability classes. Teachers know their pupils well and often intervene to help individuals or modify the tasks they set in the light of pupils' difficulties. However, their formal planning for such events is lacking and pupils do not make the good progress seen where teachers take full account of the needs of all pupils in their classes.

Target setting is not sufficiently well developed in all subject departments

33. The school has developed good systems and strategies to set challenging and realistic targets for pupils in order to help them realise their full potential in their public examinations. The systems are particularly effective for those in Years 10 and 11 and are developing well to help students in the sixth form. At present, pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not enjoy the same advantages. While plans are well advanced at whole school level, there is an inconsistency in the use of targets by individual subject departments, and pupils' progress towards meeting targets is not monitored closely enough.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

Improve features of teaching, where it is necessary, to enable pupils to become more effective in their learning by:

- improving the quality and use of homework to extend learning,
- planning more consistently and more formally to meet the different needs of higher and lower attaining pupils in mixed ability classes,
- ensuring that pupils are given more responsibility for determining their own learning.

Further improve the process of target-setting, particularly at Key Stage 3, by:

- disseminating the good practice that already exists in the school to achieve more consistency across departments,
- tracking the progress made by pupils towards reaching the targets set and giving pupils further support where needed.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	37	37	23	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	875	134
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	126	6

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	15	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	133	5

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.1
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	83	87	170

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	57	64	58
	Girls	74	67	63
	Total	131	131	121
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (78)	77 (75)	71 (68)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	45 (35)	53 (45)	38 (30)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	60	65	61
	Girls	78	77	69
	Total	138	142	130
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	82 (73)	84 (76)	77 (56)
	National	64 (62)	66 (64)	62 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	43 (39)	48 (45)	44 (17)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (31)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	82	76	158

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	44	76	80
	Girls	47	73	76
	Total	91	149	156
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	58.2 (52)	93.7 (89)	98.7 (95)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	42.8 (41)
	National	38.4 (37.8)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	14	N/A
	National		N/A

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	23	24	47

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	19.6	20.4	20	1.5	4.0	2.6
National	17.7	18.6	18.2 (17.9)	2.6	2.9	2.7 (2.8)

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	1	100
	National		73

International Bacculaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Bacculaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	0
	National		82.5

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	6
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	7
White	985
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	12	11
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	64.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	311.5

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.6
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.6
Key Stage 4	19.6
Key Stage 5	13.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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Total income	2438261
Total expenditure	2473242
Expenditure per pupil	2545
Balance brought forward from previous year	83388
Balance carried forward to next year	48407

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1009
Number of questionnaires returned	336

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	53	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	49	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	53	5	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	58	12	2	2
The teaching is good.	41	53	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	49	12	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	37	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	27	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	32	52	10	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	53	40	3	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	47	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	43	4	1	5